

INCOMING TELEGRAM

Department of State

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CORRECTED PAGE 1

1256 JAN 22 AM 6 14

Control: 9357 DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/SEC/INT
Rec'd: January 19, 1956
REV 32 PM BY g.m. Razi

FROM: Tripoli

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 157, January 19, 4 pm (SECTION ONE OF TWO)

PRIORITY

SENT DEPARTMENTS: LONDON 65, PARIS 64, MOSCOW 18, ROME 4, CAIRO 70, RABAT 22, WIESBADEN 19, BONN, ANKARA BACHDAD, BEIRUT, BENHAZI, DAMASCUS, AMMAN, TEL AVIV, JIDDA UNNUMBERED

WIESBADEN FOR TURNER. ROME FOR MAFFITT. PARIS FOR KNIGHT AND WALLNER. RABAT FOR SEVENTEEN AIR FORCE.

Accompanied by Colonel Cain and in presence permanent Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs Jerbi, I had one and one-half hour conversation with Prime Minister yesterday afternoon. After brief exchange amenities and discussion details concerning opening parliament, I opened substantive conversation by stating that, since arrival on local scene of Soviet diplomatic mission, rumors concerning Libyan intentions vis-a-vis Soviets were flooding Tripoli and coming to my attention and that for this reason I wished continue our past practice by having frank informal talk with him concerning his position under circumstances. Prime Minister replied by saying he welcomed opportunity and was prepared as always on basis our close personal association to talk with absolute frankness and candor.

I stated most serious rumor to reach me was that GOL might be contemplating extend Soviets right fly Libyan "air space", loans in connection with petroleum exploration concessions. Prime Minister categorically denied rumor had any foundation, adding that Soviet Ambassador had made no request for oil concessions or "air facilities" and that I could accept his "official assurance" that such privileges would not be granted even if requested. At this point on my invitation Colonel Cain gave full and precise explanation of implications of availability Libyan air space to Soviet aircraft.

In acknowledging validity Cain's position, Prime Minister added that Libya had made under his stewardship clear decision to side with West against Communist enemy and would under no circumstances compromise by any act this position.

However, Prime Minister continued he was now in "impossible position" vis-a-vis his Council Ministers, Libyan Parliament and leaders, other Arab

AB:MAA:RBT:WM

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-2- 377, January 19, 4 p.m., from Tripoli (SECTION ONE OF TWO)

Arab countries because of failure US to recognize and meet Libyan requirements under "sympathetic consideration" provision. Soviets had offered both political and economic assistance "without strings" and inland where "one million people were destitute and balance one hundred thousand poor." he had no basis rejecting offers without clear evidence support of traditional allies.

At this point I interrupted with long dissertation on Soviet record over period 35 years as compared record of western powers, pointing to fact that basic question was one of fundamental intent. (And since I am probably only officer in foreign service whose father-in-law was Siberian slave camp inmate and who has spent six weeks in hospital as result direct Soviet action, I speak with a certain persuasion on this subject.) Even though Soviet offer was advertised as "without strings" and even though western democracies move somewhat ponderously, was there not moral question involved? Was it not clear that western powers sought only independence based on long range political stability and economic viability for Libya as friendly ally and was it not equally clear what Soviets always had as end with them. However political facts were political facts and he was in bad corner. Conversation then turned to more specific questions of relief wheat, economic assistance and arms assistance. Prime Minister reviewed his understanding of Washington conversation of July 1954 closing with roughly following words: "in Washington we were assured that it would not be necessary to haggle over details. In words of President Eisenhower, Libya would be new Philippines. As Libya's economic and military picture developed, sympathetic consideration would be given to her needs. If I could spend ten minutes with President Eisenhower, Mr. Dulles and Assistant Secretary Allen in Washington, I could convince them without trouble that US was failing to meet its moral commitments."

TAPPIN

AB:MAA/6

(#) Omission, correction to follow.

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REAR 19 1956

INCOMING TELEGRAM

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Control: 9617

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FROM: Tripoli

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TO: Secretary of State

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NO: 357, January 19, 4 p.m. (SECTION TWO OF TWO)

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MOSCOW 18, ROME 43, CAIRO 70, RABAT 2, WIESBADEN 19; BONN
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UMSA

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PARIS FOR KNIGHT AND WALLNER

NAVY

AIR

RABAT FOR 17TH AIR FORCE

DCL

TCA

After much lengthy conversation concerning all aspects US assist-
ance to Libya, which developed no new positions on either side,
I attempted to sum up situation by asking Prime Minister if he
could give me flat and unequivocal assurance which I could pass
my Government that he did not contemplate and would not enter
into any relationship with Soviets beyond normal diplomatic one
and that he would limit activities Soviet mission to those nor-
mally performed by diplomatic missions. Specifically I asked if
he would limit its size, refuse technical assistance, refuse
economic assistance, refuse arms assistance, yjbny* permission
to establish cultural or information center, prohibit operations
of radio transmitter and strenuously resist subversive activities.
Prime Minister's reply was that he would definitely limit Soviets
to normal diplomatic activities with exception of economic assist-
ance, which he might be "most reluctantly forced accept". He
answered my specific points in each case in affirmative. As
expected, he remarked as he had to British Ambassador that as
final resort he might have to close all cultural centers.

Comment: This is necessarily sketch account of long and often
passionate conversation, but it omits no essential element.
I am reporting in cable since time is of essence. Be assured
that I gave full and concise explanation of US position and
limitations as arsenal of and banker for free world and that
my explanation of Soviet ambitions and techniques was full and
persuasive. On Prime Minister's side, I am forced to conclusion
that he feels he has bona fide grievance against US in terms

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-2- 357, January 19, 4 p.m. from Tripoli (SECTION TWO OF TWO)

our "failure" implement sympathetic consideration. Review Washington conversation July 1954 with Libyans makes clear that basic motivation which persuaded Libyans to sign base agreement without further bargaining was US promise on basis gentlemen's agreement give "sympathic consideration meritorious economic needs in future years". Is it not fact that Libyans have received no assistance since then beyond that committed at time of signing? Is it not true that Libya is "show window" in which advantages of cooperation with free world can be displayed to Arab States to maximum advantage? Is it not true that we bought Libyan goodwill and our preeminent position here "for a song"? Is it not true that our honeymoon relations with Libyans have been best in entire Arab world? Can we safely contemplate throwing away all these advantages by protracted delays even though they may be attributal to essential slowness democratic processes?

Obviously, Libyans are bargaining. But can we logically expect them to do otherwise? And do they not hold strong hand? If we fail to meet their legitimate needs promptly, will we not later be faced with danger having to meet illegitimate needs on grounds international political competition? Personally I would be most reluctant to add Libya as permanent member of US list of public charges. But, if there are to be future US economic and military assistance programs, especially for Middle East, is there any state which we can more easily persuade to adhere to free world than Libya? Do you know of better bargain?

TAPPIN

LR/2

*As received. Will be serviced upon request.

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